

**Montana Department of Military Affairs  
Disaster & Emergency Services Division  
State Emergency Coordination Center**

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Situation Report for August 12, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

***Wildfires of 2003***

**Attention \*** - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

**I. Montana Fire Conditions and Background Information:**

*Initial attack crews have been tested daily, conducting initial attack on fires and keeping them under 10 acres with a statewide success rate of 99.4% thus far this season. Over the weekend several new wildfires were started around the Missoula area. The fire response to these fires has been consolidated into a Missoula Area Command. Other current concerns include the continued management of fires within the Flathead Area Command. A red flag warning is in place for many parts of the Northern Region Area. Fire behavior will be Very Active to Extreme most areas west of the divide and in South Central Montana due to continued warm, dry, and breezy conditions. Additional primary concerns included the Hobble fire in Sweet Grass County estimated at 30,000 acres.*

**II. Current Montana Fire Situation:** (as reported to NRCG August 11, 2003 (2345))

**A. Large Fires**

**NORTHERN ROCKIES DAILY SUMMARY**

*Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5*

*National Preparedness Level = 5*

- *Missoula Area Command (Greenhoe) will be managing large fires in the Missoula Area.*
  - *Beaver Lake Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 2,500 acres, 0% contained, 19 miles SW of Missoula, Montana. Frye's Type 1 Incident Management Team will assume command of this fire at 0600 8/12.*
  - *Black Mountain 2 – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Dietrich) – 409 acres, 0% contained, 9 miles W of Missoula, Montana.*
  - *North Howard Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Kechter), 1,175 acres, 0% contained, 16 miles W of Missoula, Montana.*
  - *Fish Creek Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Benes), 600 acres, 0% contained, 24 miles W of Missoula, Montana. This complex consists of 8 fires.*
  - *East Fork Petty Creek – 500 acres, 0% contained, 13 miles W of Missoula, Montana.*
  - *Boles/Rattlesnake Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Hoff) 4,000 acres, 0% contained, 15-20 miles NE of Missoula, Montana. This complex consists of the Boles Meadow fire (2,200 acres – 0% contained) and at least 6 unstaffed fires in the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area and Wilderness Area.*
  - *Cooney Ridge #3 Complex – 3,000 acres, 0 % contained, 11 miles E of Florence, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman) has been assigned to manage this complex.*

- *Gold 1 – 1,200 acres, 0% contained, 9 miles NE of Corvallis, Montana. Type 2 Incident Team (Philbin) has been ordered to manage this fire.*
  - *Cherry Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope) – 3,200 acres, 0% contained, 12 miles SE of Thompson Falls, MT.*
  - *Hobble – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Larsen) will assume command at 0600 8/12, 34,000 acres, 10% contained, 6 miles E of Greycliff, Montana.*
  - *Flathead Area Command (Mann) is managing the large fires on the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park.*
    - *Crazy Horse – 1,500 acres, 0% contained, 10 miles NE of St. Ignatius, Montana.*
    - *Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Ferguson), 36,640 acres, 58% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana.*
    - *Wedge Canyon – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Hart), 27,524 acres, 70% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.*
    - *Trapper Creek Complex – Complex is 21,522 acres, 65% contained. This Complex is made up of the Trapper Creek (15,926 acres – 60% contained), Trout (1/4 acre – 100% contained) fires managed by Ferguson’s Type 1 Incident Management Team, and the Paul Bunyan (300 acres – 100% contained), Wolf Gun (5,281 acres – 55% contained) fires managed by Hart’s Type 1 Incident Management Team. This complex is located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, Montana.*
    - *Little Salmon Creek Complex – Fire Use Management Team (Rath) assumed command today. This 14,345 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex, made up of the Pagoda (125 acres) and the Little Salmon (14,220 acres), is being managed to accomplish resource objectives.*
  - *Rough Draw – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Whitney) - 250 acres, 0% contained, 8 miles S of Livingston, Montana.*
  - *Dirty Ike – 600 acres, 0% contained, 3 miles NE of Clinton, Montana. Chrisman’s Type 2 Incident Management Team has been ordered to manage this fire.*
  - *Pioneer Lake – 128 acres, 70% contained, 23 miles S of Bozeman, Montana.*
  - *Lande – 1,250 acres, 85% contained, 7 miles NE of Pryor, Montana.*
  - *Twin Lakes – 40 acres, 4 miles S of Georgetown Lake, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team has been ordered.*
  - *Butcher Creek – 3,000 acres, 100% contained, 14 miles NE of Red Lodge, Montana.*
  - *Alligator – 300 acres, 100% contained, 4 miles NW of Wyola, Montana.*
- Reported Major Fire Activity:      Report Date: August 10th, 2003**

<b>CHERRY CREEK:</b>	<b>Cost: \$850,000</b>	<b>% CNT: NR%</b>
<b>BLACK MOUNTAIN 2:</b>	<b>Cost: \$NR</b>	<b>% CNT: NR%</b>
<b>BEAVER LAKE COMPLEX:</b>	<b>Cost: \$250,000</b>	<b>% CNT: 0%</b>
<b>HOBBLE FIRE:</b>	<b>Cost: \$NR</b>	<b>% CNT: 10%</b>
<b>NORTH HOWARD COMPLEX:</b>	<b>Cost: \$174,700</b>	<b>% CNT: 0%</b>
<b>CRAZY HORSE:</b>	<b>Cost: \$NR</b>	<b>% CNT: 0 %</b>
<b>ROBERT:</b>	<b>Cost: \$12,542,816</b>	<b>% CNT: 58 %</b>
<b>WEDGE CANYON:</b>	<b>Cost: \$18,900,000</b>	<b>% CNT: 70 %</b>

<b>TRAPPER CREEK COMPLEX:</b>	<b>Cost: \$3,086,216</b>	<b>% CNT: 65%</b>
<b>LITTLE SALMON CREEK COMPLEX:</b>	<b>Cost: \$806,000</b>	<b>% CNT: NR%</b>
<b>BOLES/RATTLESNAKE COMPLEX:</b>	<b>Cost: \$105,00</b>	<b>% CNT: 0%</b>
<b>FISH CREEK:</b>	<b>Cost: \$NR</b>	<b>% CNT: 0%</b>
<b>ROUGH DRAW:</b>	<b>Cost: \$250,000</b>	<b>% CNT: 0%</b>
<b>GOLD 1:</b>	<b>Cost: \$100,000</b>	<b>% CNT: 0 %</b>
<b>DIRTY IKE:</b>	<b>Cost: \$NR</b>	<b>% CNT: NR%</b>
<b>COONEY RIDGE COMPLEX:</b>	<b>Cost: \$75,000</b>	<b>% CNT: 0%</b>
<b>SLIMS COMPLEX:</b>	<b>Cost: \$10,220,000</b>	<b>% CNT: 60%</b>
<b>CLEAR/NEZ COMPLEX:</b>	<b>Cost: \$62,930</b>	<b>% CNT: NR%</b>
<b>EAST FORK/PETTY CREEK:</b>	<b>Cost: \$NR</b>	<b>% CNT: 0%</b>
<b>PIONEER LAKE:</b>	<b>Cost: \$269,600</b>	<b>% CNT: 70%</b>
<b>LANDE</b>	<b>Cost: \$NR</b>	<b>% CNT: 85%</b>
<b>BUTCHER CREEK:</b>	<b>Cost: \$8,000</b>	<b>% CNT: 100%</b>
<b>ALLIGATOR:</b>	<b>Cost: \$NR</b>	<b>% CNT: 100%</b>

B. Initial Attack *Moderate initial attack – 80 new fires for 61,266 acres*

C. State Forecast For Montana

*State Forecast For Montana  
National Weather Service Great Falls Mt  
456 Am Mdt Tue Aug 12 2003*

#### **WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE**

*Today - Partly Cloudy With A Slight Chance Of Thunderstorms North. Mostly Cloudy With Scattered Thunderstorms South. Areas Of Smoke... Mainly North. Highs 80 To 90.*

*Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Evening Thunderstorms. Lows 47 To 57.*

*Wednesday - Partly Cloudy And Warmer. Slight Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms. Highs 86 To 96.*

#### **CENTRAL MONTANA**

*Today - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Morning Then Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.*

*Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening Then Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms After Midnight. Lows In The Lower 50s To Lower 60s.*

*Wednesday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The Upper 80s To Upper 90s.*

#### **SOUTHWEST MONTANA**

*Today - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The Mid 70s To Upper 80s.*

*Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening Then Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms After Midnight. Lows In The Lower 50s.*

*Wednesday...Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Morning Then Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Lower 80s To Mid 90s.*

#### **EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA**

*Today - Partly Cloudy With A Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms South And West. Mostly Sunny Northeast. Highs In The 90s To 105.*

*Tonight - Partly Cloudy With A Chance Of Thunderstorms. Lows In The 60s To Lower 70s.*

*Wednesday - Partly Cloudy With A Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms Southwest. Mostly Sunny Elsewhere. Highs In The 90s To 105.*

### **III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:**

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuations of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

<b><u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u></b>	<b><u>Date Filed</u></b>
Cascade County Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County Resolution (Stage II Fire Restrictions)	7/29/03
Fallon County Resolution (Stage I Fire Restrictions)	8/04/03
CSKT Flathead Resolution (Tribal/Forest/Range Closure)	8/04/03
Blaine County Emergency Declaration (150 acre fire)	8/06/03
Park County Emergency Declaration (Rough Draw Fire)	8/11/03
<b>Sweet Grass County Disaster Declaration – (Hobble [Diamond] Fire)</b>	<b>8-12-03</b>

### **IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:**

#### **State, Local and Tribal Declarations:**

On 8/07/03, Governor Judy Martz signed Executive Order # 16-03 in which she declared a statewide disaster thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens. This declaration supplements Executive Order # 14-03, a statewide emergency declaration issued on 7/18/03.

The Flathead County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003 stating that because the weather forecasts indicated no relief from the dry conditions and fires continued in the county it was "resolved that stage II fire restrictions on all State forested lands and all private forested lands open to the public" will be in effect until otherwise stated.

#### **FEMA Declarations:**

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003 for Flathead County's Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003 for the Hobble Fire.

#### **Requests for State Assistance:**

- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and one UH-1 Helicopter module and approximately 45 soldiers. One Blackhawk helicopter module is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula. The UH-1 helicopter module is currently deployed to Billings. The Montana National Guard Personnel Resources currently allocated to wild land

fire suppression duties stands at 45. The National Guard will be rotating in new air crews in Helena and Kalispell this weekend.

- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.
- MT Highway Patrol and MT Department of Transportation are supporting fire efforts with local jurisdictions and fire management to limit travel disturbances.
- **Park County Commissioners issued a written request for State Assistance for a wildland fire (Roughdraw) that started August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003.**

### **Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)**

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is currently operating at Activation Level III. Level III operations include a full staff 0800-1700 during weekdays with a duty officer on call after hours. Weekend operations will be staffed at Level II from 0800-1700 unless it becomes necessary to advance to a higher activation level.
- Currently DES Agency Representatives are assigned to:
  - Missoula Area Command
  - Sweetgrass County (Hobble Fire)
  - Northwest Area Command Joint Information Center

The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1700-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

## **Addendums to Situation Report**

As of: **August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

### **General Fire Information and Severity to Date**

- Missoula Area command has been ordered to manage large fires in the Missoula Area.
- Large Season ending storm not expected until mid-September or early October.
- Closures are likely to remain in effect for the remainder of the season.
- Plum Creek has closed all private and public use on their holdings, logging operations are also shut down.
- Currently there are no overnight facilities at Apgar or West Glacier.
- ***Smoke pollution in Flathead County jumped to hazardous levels Monday as fires in Northern and Western Montana flared up. In Missoula County, where fires started several miles from the city over the weekend, the state declared the air there and in nearby Stevensville to be unhealthy for sensitive groups of people.***
- General Cost for fires under Northern Rockies Coordination and acreage total [from Northern Rockies Priorities List -acreage estimate on active fires]:
- Cost: \$42.8 million      Acreage: 112,996

### **Fire Restrictions and Closures**

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Restrictions</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
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Northwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone		
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Billings)</u>		July 18, 2003
<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>		
State & Private: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell		July 25, 2003
Federal: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell		July 18, 2003
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)</u>		July 21, 2003
<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>		
State & Private: Hill, Chouteau, Judith Basin, Petroleum, Blaine, Phillips, Valley, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Fergus, Golden Valley, Daniels		July 21, 2003
Federal: Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland		July 25, 2003
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Miles City)</u>		August 04, 2003
State & Private: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud		
Federal: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud counties		

### **Closures: Information is current as of 08-12-03**

#### **Southwest**

##### **Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest:**

Fires and fire fighting have caused several road, trail, and campground closings in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Closed roads include # 81 Anderson Mountain Road, west of Wisdom, off Highway 43. Note: The Gibbonsville and Foothills roads, west of Wisdom, are both open now. The Gibbonsville road is open on both sides of the state line.

##### **Bitterroot National Forest:**

*The Ravalli County Sheriff's Office is contacting area residents just north of the Gold Creek campground and up to the Middle Burnt Fork Road to advise them of the current situation. This is a Stage 1 Alert **NOT** an evacuation. Public access along the Lost Horse Road beginning at the junction of the Lick Creek Road is temporarily closed due to the current fire activity.*

#### **Northwest**

##### **Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park:**

*The temporary evacuation of the Apgar Village area was conducted as a precaution on Monday August 11<sup>th</sup>. Due to Heavy smoke and to facilitate fire-fighting efforts the Going-To-The Sun Road is temporarily closed from Apgar to Logan Pass a distance of 18 miles. The North Fork Road remains closed from Glacier Rim to the Canadian boarder. The west entrance will be closed at the West Glacier bridge over the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. Sperry Chalet is being evacuated as a precaution in the event of extreme fire behavior. The area north from Lake McDonald and west of the Continental Divide is temporarily closed.*

##### **Lolo National Forest**

*The Sanders County commissioners have issued an evacuation warning for residents in the Eddy Creek Area. In addition the following closures are in effect: Fish Creek Road, Forest Service Road (FSR)343, from Big Pine Point of Interest to the south at the junction with West Fork Fish Creek Wagon Mountain Road, FSR 33, from the junction with Howard Creek, FSR 238, to the east at the junction with Petty Creek Road.*

#### **Web Links:**

**Glacier National Park Fire Management:**  
<http://www.nps.gov/glac/resources/fires.htm>

**Northern Rockies Interagency Information Center**  
<http://fs.fed.us/r1/fire/2003fires/index.htm>